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U.S. Rescues Fliers In Greenland Crash Of Nicaragua Plane

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WASHINGTON, April 26 — The crew of a United States Air National Guard plane rescued three fliers last weekend from a Nicaraguan-owned plane that had crashed on the Greenland icecap.

A spokesman for the embassy of Denmark, of which Greenland is a territory, quoted a report from the Danish police in Greenland as saying that Aeronica, the Nicaraguan domestic and international airline, had bought the plane in Southern Yemen and that it was being ferried to Nicaragua.

The Danish police report said the five-man crew that had been hired in Southern Yemen included an American, an Israeli and an Indian, who were the three survivors. The others were a Filipino, who died in the crash, and a Jordanian, who died later of injuries and cold. The temperature during the night on the icecap was 13 degrees below zero.

A spokesman for the Nicaraguan Embassy said Aeronica had hired the crew in Southern Yemen to fly the plane to Managua and train Nicaraguan pilots and crews, who had no experience with the type of plane that crashed. The spokesman said the plane was to have been used on a route between Managua, the capital, and the country's Atlantic coast.

Asked why the plane had been bought in Southern Yemen, which is on the Arabian peninsula bordering on the Red Sea, the spokesman said, "I guess we got it cheaper."

The pilot of the rescue plane, a transport fitted with skis, was Lieut. Colonel Raymond Tousey of the New York Air National Guard based in Schenectady. He said in a telephone interview that the Nicaraguan-owned Fokker 27, a twin-engine propeller driven plane made in the Netherlands, lacked the range to fly directly across the Atlantic and was therefore puddle-jumping across the North Atlantic. "That's the old World War II ferry route for fighters and light bombers," he said.

A spokesman for the Defense Department here said the Pentagon knew little more about the episode than had been disclosed at midweek in a press release announcing the rescue.

The Fokker 27 is a model that can be used for a variety of civilian and military purposes, carrying passengers, cargo or paratroopers. Some Fokker 27's have been fitted with surveillance devices for maritime reconnaissance or rigged with bomb racks to attack shipping, according to Jane's All the World's Aircraft.

Under Radar Surveillance

The crew of the downed plane was led by Craig Dennis. Colonel Tousey said. According to The Associated Press, Mr. Dennis has said that he is an American who flew for the Central Intelligence Agency during the Vietnam War and now ferries planes for a living.

Colonel Tousey, of Clermont, N.Y., who runs a farm and flies for the Air National Guard several weeks a year, said the Nicaraguan plane had taken

it from Iceland but ran low on fuel on the way to Greenland. The plane radioed a distress signal to an American radar station in Greenland.

The spokesman for the Danish Embassy said the pilot of the plane reported that a fuel pump had gone bad and that he was seeking a place for an emergency landing. But the pilot reported that fog prevented him from finding an airstrip in eastern Greenland.

The radar station, part of the Distant Early Warning, or DEW, line, had the plane under radar surveillance, Colonel Tousey said, and was able to determine the map coordinates of its location after it ran out of fuel and crashed.

"There was just one straight line of debris," Colonel Tousey said.

Survivor Waves Shirt

The Air National Guard team, which flies the only ski-equipped C-130 transports in the United States Air Force, was at Sondrestrom Air Base in Greenland on a routine supply mission, flying fuel to radar sites, when it received the request for the rescue, Colonel Tousey said.

Colonel Tousey said he took off in one plane at about 8 P.M. Saturday and

found the downed Nicaraguan plane, but could see no survivors. Because dark was settling in and the weather was getting bad, he did not try to land.

The next morning, about 4:15, two C-130's flew to the crash site, where the crews saw a man waving his shirt. Colonel Tousey landed his plane, found three men alive and picked up two bodies. The Colonel said he was on the ground for about an hour.

Asked about reports that the Nicaraguan plane carried large amounts of cash, gold, drugs and Chinese literature intended for the Sandinista Government in Managua, Colonel Tousey said, "I saw none of that, but then I wasn't looking for anything like that."

The Danish police report said the survivors were taken back to Sondrestrom Air Base, where they were put into ambulances and taken to the base hospital. The Israeli, who needed more medical attention than the base could provide, was flown to Copenhagen the next day, the report said.

The Danish police said the American and the remaining member of the crew had been kept in Greenland for questioning and an investigating team would be sent from Copenhagen to inquire into the cause of the crash.